

Fifth Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 29, 2018

The Collect: Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

First Lesson: Acts 8:26-40 read from the New American Standard Bible

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert road. So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. "In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth."

The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 22:24-30 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; * I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: * "May your heart live for ever!"

26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, * and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the Lord; * he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; * all who go down to the dust fall before him.

29 My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; * they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn * the saving deeds that he has done.

Epistle: 1 John 4:7-21 read from the New Century Version Bible

Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could have life through him. This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us. He sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins.

Dear friends, if God loved us that much we also should love each other. No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is made perfect in us.

We know that we live in God and he lives in us, because he gave us his Spirit. We have seen and can testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God has God living inside, and that person lives in God. And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love.

God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. This is how love is

made perfect in us: that we can be without fear on the day God judges us, because in this world we are like him. Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's perfect love drives out fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear, so love is not made perfect in the person who fears.

We love because God first loved us. If people say, "I love God," but hate their brothers or sisters, they are liars. Those who do not love their brothers and sisters, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have never seen. And God gave us this command: Those who love God must also love their brothers and sisters.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 15:1-8 read from the New International Version Bible

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On April 30th we remember Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, Editor and Prophetic witness

Sarah Josepha Buell born October 24th, 1788 was an American writer and an influential editor. She is the author of the nursery rhyme "*Mary Had a Little Lamb*". She famously

campaigns for the creation of the American holiday known as Thanksgiving.

Sarah was born in Newport, New Hampshire to Captain Gordon Buell and Martha Whittlesay Buell. Her parents believed in equal education for both sexes. Early on in her life, she was educated by her mother and her brother Horatio who taught her what he had learned at Dartmouth; later on, she was self taught.

Sarah married David Hale in 1813, and had five children. Hale, a lawyer, died in 1822 and, in perpetual mourning, Sarah wore black for the rest of her life.

In 1823, with the monetary support of her late husband's Freemason lodge, she published a collection of her poems entitled *The Genius of Oblivion*.

Her first novel, was published in the U.S. under the title *Northwood: Life North and South* and in London under the title, *A New England Tale*, made her one of the first American women novelists and one of the first of either gender to write a book about slavery. The book, which espoused New England virtues as the model to follow for national prosperity, was immediately successful. The book garnered praise from Reverend John Blake, who asked Hale to move to Boston to serve as the editor of his journal, Ladies' Magazine. She agreed and, from 1828 until 1836, she served as editor in Boston, though she preferred being called an "editress". Her collection *Poems for Our Children*, which includes the now-famous "*Mary Had a Little Lamb*", was published in 1830.

Louis Antoine Godey of Philadelphia wanted to hire Hale as the editor of his journal Godey's Lady's Book. He bought the Ladies' Magazine, now renamed American Ladies' Magazine, and merged it with his journal. In 1837 Hale began working as editor of the expanded Godey's Lady's Book, and remained editor at Godey's for forty years, retiring at the age of 89 in 1877. During her tenure at Godey's, many important women contributed poetry and prose to the magazine. During this time, she became one of the most important and influential arbiters of American taste. In its day, Godey's, with no significant competitors, had an influence unimaginable for any single publication today. The magazine is credited with an ability to influence fashions not only for women's clothes, but also in domestic architecture. During this

time, Hale wrote many novels and poems, publishing nearly fifty volumes of work by the end of her life.

Hale was an early advocate of women's education, particularly higher education for women; she helped in the founding of Vassar College. She was also a strong advocate of the American nation and union. In the 1820s and 1830s, a time when other American magazines merely compiled and reprinted articles from British periodicals, Hale was among the leaders of a group of American editors who insisted on publishing American writers. She particularly liked to publish fiction with American themes, the frontier, and historical fiction set during the American Revolution. Hale adamantly opposed slavery, but she was equally devoted to the Union.

Hale is credited as the individual most responsible for making Thanksgiving a national holiday in the United States; it had previously been celebrated only in New England and was largely unknown in the American South. Her advocacy for the national holiday began in 1846 and lasted 17 years before it was successful. Her initial efforts failed to persuade, but finally convinced Abraham Lincoln to support legislation establishing a national holiday of Thanksgiving in 1863. The new national holiday was considered a unifying day after the stress of the American Civil War.

Hale died at her home, in Philadelphia, on April 30th, 1879.

Let us pray: Gracious God, we bless your Name for the vision and witness of Sarah Hale, whose advocacy for the ministry of women helped to support the deaconess movement. Make us grateful for your many blessings, that we may come closer to Christ in our own families; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**